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AN APPEAL

TO THE

PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES,

IN BEHALF OF

ART, ARTISTS, AND THE PUBLIC WEAL.

"Fiat justitia, ruat Cælum."


BY SHEARJASHUB SPOONER, A. B., M. D.,

AUTHOR OF "A BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL DICTIONARY OF PAINTERS, ENGRAVERS, SCULPTORS, AND ARCHITECTS, FROM ANCIENT TO MODERN TIMES."

NEW-YORK.

1854.

These pages having been written with great rapidity, and put into the printer's hands without revision, makes it unnecessary to apologize farther for a few errors in composition, and some repetitions.

 This pamphlet may be had of the AUTHOR, No. 16 Greenwich-street, or G. P. PUTNAM & Co., No. 10 Park Place, New-York.

From 8077.1

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J. J. REED, PRINTER,

16 Spruce-street, N. Y.

APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FELLOW-CITIZENS :

Some years ago, I purchased, in Paris, all the coppers (522 in number) of those magnificent works originated by the Emperor Napoleon, and published at the expense of the French Government, entitled "The Musée Français and the Musée Royal," with the view to restore them to their original beauty, as I have already restored those of Boydell's Illustrations of Shakspeare.

The restoration and publication of these great works has been the end and aim of all my labors for the promotion of art. I have constantly referred to this object in all my works.* From 1842, I watched these

* "Although it does not become a man to prate of himself, yet the author trusts he will be pardoned when he speaks of his *labors* and their *object*. For a long period, his labors have been directed to the great object of the restoration and publication of Napoleon's magnificent works, the Musée Français and the Musée Royal. He trusts he may soon be able to present the first numbers to the public. These, and his other achieved undertakings, have made his life one of the most untiring industry. In order to find time for these enterprises, and still attend to the calls of his profession, he has been obliged to deprive himself of repose and relaxation; and during the six years he was engaged in publishing Boydell's Illustrations of Shakspeare, and in preparing his Dictionary for the press, he spent but one evening out of his study, except those of the Sabbath, relinquishing his toil only at midnight, to be resumed at dawn.

"These self-imposed labors have not been assumed through any mercenary or selfish motives. His experience has taught him the precarious results of literary and publishing enterprises of the nature undertaken by him, in the present state of the Fine Arts in our country. The amount of capital and labor he has invested has been enormous, and the risk proportionate; his books admonish him that he has already embarked many thousands of dollars which he can never hope to regain. Still, what he has accomplished is to him a theme of pride and exultation; it has also been a labor of love. His reward is the consciousness of having done something toward awakening a love for, and an interest in art and artists, and that he will leave to his countrymen, for their delight and instruction, so many world-renowned and world-approved specimens of the highest art. Posterity must be his judge; but he cannot forbear to add, that can he now succeed in restoring the great works before mentioned, and leave them as a rich legacy to his country, for the promotion of the Fine Arts in coming time, he will have accomplished his every earthly aspiration."—See *Spooner's Anecdotes of Painters, Engravers, Sculptors and Architects*, preface to Vol. I. Also his *Introduction to his Dictionary of the same*, and the preface to Vol. II. of the *American Edition of Boydell's Illustrations of Shakspeare*.

plates with intense anxiety till I could secure them. Had it not been for me, they would now have been scattered over the world. Shall they be again exposed to this disaster? Heaven forbid!

Such is the public apathy on the subject of the Fine Arts, and such the opposition I have been compelled to encounter from foreign interest and jealousy, together with other adverse circumstances, that I now almost despair of being able to consummate my plans by my own individual exertions, though I have fully proved to the world that they are entirely practicable, and at a very moderate cost.

I therefore propose, and pledge myself to give these coppers, now and forever, to the Smithsonian Institution, provided she will carry out my plans. I will also devote my time to the supervision of the restoration and publication of the works, without any pecuniary remuneration. I do not desire a dollar of the funds to pass through my hands; if this should be deemed desirable, I will give bonds for the faithful discharge of my duties. This course would make it a national enterprise, which would enlist the sympathy and support of the whole country. If, after due consideration, the Smithsonian Institution should deem it incompatible with the legitimate objects of the Institution, then, I offer the same terms to any other public institution in the country, or to any body of liberal men, who will associate themselves together, to carry out the enterprise for the public good.

The coppers are now in bond in the New-York Custom House. The first thing to be done, is to memorialize Congress to admit them duty free. This I have not yet done; but I have been laboring incessantly since October last, when they were entered, to prepare the way and ensure success. Such is the difficulty of drawing attention to the subject, that I have accomplished very little. I have just returned from Washington, where, after a fortnight's labor, I abandoned the field in despair. I found it utterly impossible for me, as a general thing, to obtain such a hearing as would enable me to explain my views, so that they could be appreciated, or to convince those in power that it was possible for a man to visit the Capitol with a disinterested project. I was also informed that it would be next to an impossibility to get a special act through Congress to admit the coppers duty free. In view of these facts, the importance of the subject, and the necessity for immediate action, I beg and implore every lover of art, and of his country, to give these pages a candid perusal; and if my plans meet his approbation, to give them his influence and support. If anything is to be done, it must be accomplished during the present session of Congress; else the bond will expire, and the coppers must be re-shipped.

The restoration and publication of these great works, containing, as they do, the master-pieces of art in the world, must prove of the greatest utility in the advancement of art, and of its appreciation and support, as I shall presently show. I therefore respectfully and earnestly solicit all who feel an interest in the subject, to correspond with me, and to suggest and devise the best plan, should mine fail, or be deemed impracticable, to consummate this great enterprise. I have never had any secrets; my house has always been open to lovers of art, and I should be pleased to exhibit, at all times, what I have accomplished, and what I propose to accomplish. I have two copies of the original edition of *Boydell's Illustrations of Shakspeare*, which may be compared with the American edition of the same; and two copies of the *Musée Français* and the *Musée Royal*, one of which is a proof before the letter.

HISTORY OF THE MUSÉE FRANÇAIS AND THE MUSÉE ROYAL.

When the Allies entered Paris in 1815, they found in the gallery of the Louvre about two thousand works of art—the gems of the world, in painting and antique sculpture—mostly the spoils of war, deposited there by the Emperor Napoleon. The selection of these works was entrusted to a commission, at the head of whom was the Baron Denon, who accompanied the Emperor in all his expeditions, for this purpose. The Louvre, at this time, was the acknowledged emporium of the fine arts. The grand determination of Napoleon to place France highest in art among the nations, did not rest here. The design of combining in one single series, five hundred and twenty-two line engravings from the finest paintings and antique statues in the world, was a conception worthy of his genius and foresight; and by its execution he conferred a lasting favor, not only on the artistic, but the civilized world, for the originals were subsequently restored by the Allies to their rightful owners, and only about three hundred and fifty pieces remained of that splendid collection. “These works” (the *Musée Français* and the *Musée Royal*) says a distinguished connoisseur, “are unquestionably the greatest production of modern times. They exhibit a series of exquisite engravings by the most distinguished artists, of such a magnificent collection of paintings and sculpture as can never be again united.” These works were intended as a great treasury of art; from which not only artists, but the whole world might derive instruction and profit. To secure the utmost perfection in every department, no expense was spared. The drawings for the engravers to engrave from, were executed by the most distinguished artists, in order to ensure that every peculiarity, perfection, and *imperfection* in the originals

should be exactly copied, and these are pointed out in the accompanying criticisms. These drawings alone cost the French government 400,000 francs.

The engravings were executed by the most distinguished engravers of Europe, without regard to country ; among whom it is sufficient to mention Raffaele Morghen, the Chevalier von Müller, and his son C. F. von Müller, Bervic, Richomme, Rosaspina, Bartolozzi, Gandolfi, Schiavonetti, the elder and younger Laurent, Massard, Girardet, Lignon, Chatillon, Audouin, Forster, Claessens, etc. Stanley says that proof impressions of Bervic's masterpiece, the Laocoön, have been sold in London for thirty guineas each. There are many prints in these works not less celebrated, and which are regarded by connoisseurs as masterpieces of the art.

Nor was this all. Napoleon summoned Visconti, the famous antiquary, archæologist, and connoisseur, from Rome to Paris, to assist in getting up the admirable descriptions and criticisms, particularly of the ancient statues. This department was confided to Visconti, Guizot, Clarie, and the elder Duchesne. The supervision of the engraving and publishing department was entrusted to the Messrs. Robilliard, Peronville, and Laurent. These works were published in numbers of four plates, atlas folio, at the price of 96 francs each, for the proofs before the letter, and 48 francs for the prints. The first number of the Musée Français was issued in 1803, and the last in 1811 ; but the Musée Royal, which was intended to supply the deficiencies of the Musée Français, was not completed till 1819 ; nevertheless, it was Napoleon's work, though consummated in the reign of Louis XVIII.

The Musée Français was originally published in five volumes, and contains, besides the descriptions and criticisms on the plates, admirable essays,—1st, on the History of Painting, from its origin in ancient times down to the time of Cimabue ; 2d, on the History of Painting in the Italian, German, Dutch, Flemish, and French schools ; 3d, on the History of Engraving ; 4th, on the History of Ancient Sculpture. The Musée Royal was published in two volumes. A second edition of the Musée Français was published by the Messrs. Galignani, in four volumes, with an English and French letter-press, but both greatly abridged. The letter-press of the Musée Royal has never been rendered into English. The plates were sold by the French government in 1836, since which time a small edition has been printed from both works.

ADVANTAGE OF CULTIVATING THE FINE ARTS.

The advantages of cultivating the Fine Arts are now fully acknowledged throughout the civilized world, and therefore require little comment at this time. They not only refine and elevate the mind, and conduce to pleasure and enjoyment, but they contribute largely to the prosperity of a nation. In proof of this position I could fill a volume with quotations from the greatest artists, learned men and statesmen.

Sir Martin A. Shee, late President of the Royal Academy, London, says:—"It should be the policy of a great nation to be liberal and magnificent; to be free of her rewards, splendid in her establishments, and gorgeous in her public works. These are not the expenses that sap and mine the foundations of public prosperity; that break in upon the capital or lay waste the income of a State; they may be said to arise in her most enlightened views of general advantage; to be amongst her best and most profitable speculations; they produce large sums of respect and consideration from our neighbors and competitors, and of patriotic exultation among ourselves; they make men proud of their country, and from priding it, prompt in its defence; they play upon all the chords of generous feeling, elevate us above the animal and the machine, and make us triumph in the powers and attributes of men."

Sir George Beaumont, an eminent connoisseur and statesman, says:—"My opinion is that the Apollo, the Venus, the Laocoön, &c., are worth many thousands a year to the country that possesses them."

After the peace of Amiens, Benjamin West visited Paris, to see the master-pieces of art which Napoleon had collected in that capital. As he strolled through the Louvre, he met Mr. Fox, the British Minister, and took occasion to point out to him the advantages of such an institution. Mr. Fox was so forcibly struck with his remarks that he observed, "I have been rocked in the cradle of politics, but never before was so much struck with the advantages of the fine arts, even in a political bearing, to the prosperity as well as the renown of a kingdom; and I do assure you, Mr. West, if I ever have it in my power to influence our government to promote the arts, the conversation we have had to-day shall not be forgotten." The Royal British Institution was projected by West, and though he could not consummate his plans in his day, they were ultimately adopted with scarcely a modification. They have another advantage—they induce liberal-minded men to make donations for the public good. The British Museum, National Gallery, and the Royal

British Institution, have thus been exceedingly enriched. When Parliament were debating the propriety of purchasing the Angerstein Collection to found the English National Gallery, Sir George Beaumont advocated the measure with enthusiasm. Finding much apathy on the subject, he exclaimed in debate, "to bribe the House," "Buy this collection and I will give you mine;" and this he nobly did, not in the form of a bequest, but he sent his collection, valued at 70,000 guineas, to the Gallery as soon as the rooms were prepared for their reception.

Numerous instances might be cited from ancient and modern history. What made Venice the mistress of the seas? What supports the million inhabitants of Paris, "the toy shop of Europe?" Her ten thousand beautiful fabrics and works of art. What enables the artisans of Paris to excel in these things? not their superior genius, but that they are educated from their infancy in a city abounding in works of art, so that they early imbibe correct ideas of forms of beauty, and thus are enabled to bring to the aid of their skillful hands "the accumulated wisdom of ages" appertaining to art.

It is said that Anabale Caracci gave his preference to the Scourging of St. Andrew by Domenichino, over that of St. Andrew led to the gibbet by Guido, painted in competition in the church of S. Rocco at Rome, from the passing criticism of an old woman. Let a connoisseur go into one of our public exhibitions of works of art, and attentively listen to the criticisms passing before him; he will find those of most foreigners surprisingly correct, while those of most Americans will approve the meritricious trickery of art, as gaudy coloring and clap-trap effect, devoid of nature and truth.

WAY THE GREEKS ENCOURAGED ART.

It has been the wonder and admiration of the world, that the Greeks, in the course of three or four centuries, should have attained such perfection in every species of art that ennobles the human mind, as oratory, poetry, painting, sculpture, and architecture, as to make their productions the models of all succeeding ages. Two things explain the cause—freedom of action and certainty of reward. This is exemplified in the whole history of the arts and sciences. Wherever, and whenever they have been appreciated and patronized, they have flourished. The ancient eastern nations, among whom the freedom of speech and action was forbidden, and every man was obliged to follow the trade or occupation of his caste, never made much progress. Nor will the moderns in those

countries progress till caste is done away and every man allowed to follow the inclinations of his genius.

The Greeks were favored with a climate the most congenial for the perfect development of both mental and physical powers, and beauty of form. Every free-man was at liberty to follow his favorite pursuits. They rewarded all who excelled in any thing that was useful or beautiful and that with a lavish hand. The prices they paid their artists for their great works, were so liberal, that the remuneration of the greatest modern artists is comparatively small. The man of genius was sure of immortality and wealth; while those who presumed to offer a poor work were derided. The applause bestowed on their best efforts, repeated by the orators, the poets, the philosophers, and the historians, were more inspiring than gold. The Cow of Myron, the Venus of Apelles, and the Cupid of Praxiteles, have exercised every pen. Their Academic groves, and their games were the admiration and resort of the neighboring countries. They decreed statues to their great men who deserved well of their country. To other powerful incentives, the Greek artists had the advantage of the best models before them in their gymnastic exercises and public games, where the youth contended for the prize quite naked. The Greeks esteemed natural qualities so highly, that they decreed the first rewards to those who distinguished themselves in feats of agility and strength. Statues were often raised to wrestlers. Not only the first youth of Greece, but the sons of kings and princes of the neighboring countries sought renown in the public games and gymnastic exercises. Chrysippus and Cleanthus distinguished themselves in the games before they were known as philosophers. Plato appeared as a wrestler, both at the Isthmian and Pythian games; and Pythagoras carried off the prize of Elis. The passion which inspired them was glory—the ambition of having a statue erected to their memory in the most sacred place in Greece, to be admired by the whole people. By these means Greece brought the Fine Arts to perfection; by neglecting them, Rome failed to equal her; by pursuing an equally liberal and enlightened policy, every country may also excel in them.

WAY FOREIGN PEOPLE ENCOURAGE ART.

This has already been hinted at—namely, their numerous academies; institutions, galleries of art, and systems of liberal prizes, for the instruction of their artists, and to excite their emulation to enable them to excel, and the people, that they may know how to appreciate and patronize art. They employ their own artists. England, about seventy years ago,

mostly patronized foreigners, as we do now. If a statue, or a monument was to be erected, it must be executed by an Italian; if fine paintings and engravings were to be purchased, they must be imported from the Continent. But they have since learned better; and now are most liberal and profuse in supporting and encouraging native art. They pay their eminent artists enormous prices for their works, caress them, and honor them with distinction and titles. They publish a multitude of fine prints and illustrated works, and find a ready market in all parts of the world, which thus pays them rich tribute, greatly to the encouragement of their artists. The Great House of Ackerman & Co., in the Strand, employ more than 600 persons in and about London alone. There are several other similar establishments in that metropolis. The prices they pay for the copyright of a masterpiece, exceeds belief. Edwin Landseer has received £5,000 for a single picture for this purpose. Our artists would be glad to have their works engraved without pay. In England, the prices of their fine prints vary according to the size and subject; and range from \$5 to \$50 for the prints, and the proofs at double those prices. The nobility, gentry, and people of wealth and taste, take the proofs with an especial view to encourage art. For further information on this subject, I must refer you to Ackerman & Co.'s Trade Catalogue of Prints, the London Art Journal, and works on art, recently published in England, or to my own works.

WAY AMERICANS ENCOURAGE ART.

The genius of our institutions does not permit liberal government patronage for the promotion of art; therefore, we must look mostly to the *people* for its encouragement and support.

Nature is beautiful in all her forms; and a love of art, or a combination and expression of forms of beauty, is a principle implanted in the human breast. A just apprehension and appreciation of the beautiful, is the result of a right education. As a people, we love art, and we patronize art to a considerable extent. But do we do this with judgment? Nay, do we do our duty to ourselves, to our artists, and to our country? You cannot convince a foreigner that any other people excel his own countrymen in art; but Americans seem to think otherwise, and bestow almost all their patronage abroad. There are almost daily sales in New York, of French pictures, *manufactured*, not *painted*, in large establishments where a great many skillful *artizans*, not *artists*, are employed; and in the execution of a single picture, several hands are employed. Thus, one makes the design, usually copied from an engraving, another puts in the sky, a third paints the trees, a fourth inserts the figures, and

a fifth, more skillful than the rest, finishes the *master-piece*. And yet, these pictures, with heavy duties, find ready and profitable sales, while better ones by a native artist, offered in the same collection, will be passed by, or, if sold, will afford him less remuneration than the wages of an ordinary mechanic. Even many of our merchant princes adorn, or rather *disgrace*, their palaces with this trash. It is estimated that more than 30,000 pictures were passed through the New York Custom House alone, last year.* Foreigners do, and justly too, ridicule us, and say that we

* Few persons have more attentively regarded these evils than myself, and few persons, even artists themselves, are at all aware of their extent, and the mischief inflicted thereby on the country. A few facts will illustrate. I am acquainted with the Principal of one of these large Parisian Picture Manufacturing Establishments. From him I learned, that his house sold about 10,000 pictures in the United States, in 1842, mostly at auction in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. These pictures are for the most part put in *French leaf* or imitation gilt frames, the burnished parts being gold, so skillfully done as to pass with the crowd for real Parisian gilt frames. The paintings are invoiced at first cost in Paris—the frames as *false gilt*. When offered at public sale, they are always limited (in violation of law) so as to ensure large profits, and to prevent the market from being glutted. Hence, notwithstanding the almost daily sales in New York, at all seasons of the year, there is no very material variation in the prices, except at particular seasons, when the influx of strangers causes stronger competition.

There are not only frequent day sales, where a catalogue of 150 or 200 pictures are offered, but there are two establishments in Broadway where French pictures and prints, books, &c., are sold every evening. One firm in Maiden Lane imported near 5,000 French pictures last year. There are at least half a dozen firms in Maiden Lane, a part of whose business is picture importation, and dealing in pictures. There are also many more in other streets, and almost all the dealers in French fancy articles import more or less French pictures. In short, New York alone cannot pay less than half a million annually for French paintings.

Now such pictures, even if they did not drain the country of an enormous sum annually, are a positive injury to art, for they vitiate the public taste, and they inflict a death blow to native art. Unless an artist has acquired a distinguished reputation, or can paint a good and fashionable portrait, wo betide him. He must live in a garret, teach drawing and painting, when he can get a pupil, and, to eke out a miserable livelihood, paint pictures for the dealers, at the wages of a hireling. It is in vain for him to offer his productions in competition with foreign capitalists—they will be sold for what the frame cost him, or if offered without a frame, they will sell for little more than the cost of canvass and colors. This is no fiction, but a sad reality, which every artist in New York will corroborate. To know these things, one must observe, seek the acquaintance of artists, and hear their just complaints and denunciations.

Since the destruction of the American Art Union, it is no uncommon thing to see artists who were largely employed by that Institution, offering and sacrificing their works in the auctions. They must do something or starve. They rarely get a commission for a picture. People had rather go to the auctions.

Many of our artists would be glad to paint better paintings at the prices foreign pictures bring, though it is hard for them to compete with French girls.

“have a taste for art, but it is *low art*.” Foreigners also grossly impose upon us. They think the *fag-end* good enough for us, and they flood us with their *refuse*.

I have seen thousands of mock-proofs sold at auction in New York, from which, if they were mezzotints, the bloom was entirely worn off. This cheat is effected by filling or covering up the lettering; and some are simple enough to pay twice as much for them as for a print from the same plate with the letter. When all Europe is supplied, then our market is cared for. The London Art Journal frequently comes to us so much worn as to be useless except for the designs. They send us *pastiches*, or imitations of the old masters, and we buy them and hang them up in our rooms, and invite the connoisseur to see them, to excite his pity or contempt.*

It is a universal complaint made by our artists who have gone to Italy, that they seldom get a commission from the many Americans travelling abroad—they go into their studies and bore them, and then pass to some Italian copyist, and employ him. In proof of this, I refer you to the testimony of J. Fennimore Cooper, of Allston, of Greenough, of Vanderlyn, of Weir, and of others.

I do not mean to say that these observations will apply to all Americans, but to the great mass of our people. We do patronize those of our artists who, after years of neglect, toil, and despondency, have reached an enviable height in climbing the ladder of fame—and there are many such amongst us; but then, with few honorable exceptions, we patronize them for *fashion's sake*, and to gratify our own pride in possessing a work by their hands, which confers honor on us. Inmann, in his days of prosperity, was overwhelmed with commissions, but the moment adversity touched him, he was deserted. He solicited employment at reduced prices, and was refused. During his last illness, he was supported and consoled by his brothers, the Odd Fellows.

Mr. Cooper gave Greenough his first commission for a group—the Chaunting Cherub. “This commission,” says the artist, “saved me from

* Though these audacious frauds have been practised with impunity on the American public, for many years, not a single public journal has ever lifted its voice to expose and rebuke the swindlers. Such things would not be tolerated a moment in any European city. Works of art offered at public sale, in Italy, Germany, France, and England, as genuine originals, must be so specified and the vouchers produced. Even the auctioneer is responsible, and in the catalogue he must state them to be *original*, or *supposed* to be original, or in the *style* of such a master. But here, the most wretched copies are advertised and sold as originals by the greatest masters.

Whenever you get your Art Journal in this worn state, call on the Agent, and you will find that he always has some *choice copies* laid aside for those who are *particular*.

despair." When he received, through the influence of the same gentleman, the commission from our Government for the Statue of Washington, which now adorns the grounds of the Capitol, he says, "he danced like a child for joy." Now, the bright world, dark and dreary to him, became a paradise. Powers, full of enthusiasm and poverty, went to Italy in the steerage. After years of toil, he has won a world-renowned reputation and abundant employment. You invite him back to Washington, and he makes the pathetic, yet bitter reply, "I cannot afford it." After having won a crown of laurel more glorious than Cæsar's, he sends four of his master-pieces to the Great Exhibition, for the approval and approbation of his countrymen, and they rewarded him with a bronze medal. In the whole history of art, I know of but one parallel to this. The American Institute awarded to a copy of the American edition of Boydell's Illustrations of Shakspeare, a silver medal for the best specimen of *typography*. Facts without number might be enumerated, but I appeal to every artist in this wide land, for the truth of my statements. I plead his cause, and your cause—not my own. We do not patronize the youthful aspirant, nor the great majority of our artists. These are the true reasons why American art now withers, and our Academies and Art-Unions droop and fail. I am acquainted with many, very many artists in New York and elsewhere, and I know their aspirations, their trials, their feelings, and their opinions. That the Greek artists won imperishable renown is not wonderful; but that *any* of our artists should distinguish themselves, and that this cruel apathy and injustice should not drive them from the arid field in disgust, is truly wonderful. It is only the fire of genius, and "Hope—auspicious hope," which restrain them.

These are humiliating facts, and should arouse us to a sense of duty and justice, if not of patriotism and policy. They should teach us the importance of encouraging our own artists, and to endeavor to establish a school of our own. We pay foreigners thousands and hundreds of thousands every year—enough to effect this object: to establish a school that would do honor to the country. Last autumn, a New York house obtained 2,000 subscribers for two prints, representing Sir Walter Scott and his Friends, and Shakspeare and his Contemporaries, after the Faeds of Edinburgh, at \$10 each for the prints, and \$20 or more for the proofs, thus amounting to more than \$40,000 for two engravings, far from being master-pieces. How this swells the profits of the publisher in addition to his home subscription.

An American Engraver cannot get a paying subscription for a *fine print* of *any subject*. It has been tried again and again. Hence, Leutze must get his great picture of Washington Crossing the Delaware engraved in Paris. Had the *Boydell plates* been restored in England, its success

would have been complete; and, no doubt, more subscribers could have been obtained in the United States, at double the price. This is the opinion of almost every engraver in New York.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO AVERT THESE EVILS?

Plans enough have been devised were they carried out with patriotic spirit. We should away with this foreign patronage altogether, and encourage our own artists. We should endeavor to educate the people to love, appreciate, and support art, by publishing and circulating choice works treating of art, and the masterpieces of engraving. We have few public galleries of paintings, consequently, the great mass of the community must form their taste for the fine arts from engravings.

To show how much one gifted and enthusiastic man can do in promoting the fine arts in his country, where his efforts are seconded, I beg to refer you to the life of Alderman Boydell. From a poor boy, he rose to be Lord Mayor of London. Himself an engraver, he brought the art, then at a low ebb in England, to such perfection, by his liberal patronage and sound judgment, that his countrymen have termed him the "Father of Engraving in England." "Before his time," says Gould, "all fine prints were imported from the Continent, for which the empire was drained of immense sums annually." He himself says, that he entirely stopped the foreign importation, and exported largely to the Continent. In his petition to Parliament for permission to dispose of his gallery of paintings, designs, engravings, &c., by lottery, for the benefit of his creditors, he assigns as a principal reason of his failure, the disastrous effects of the Berlin and Milan decrees, which entirely broke up his print trade on the Continent.

Emboldened by his success in his own department, he declared that all that English artists wanted to excel in historical painting, was adequate encouragement; and he resolved to extend this patronage. About 1785, he projected his celebrated Shakspeare Gallery. He erected the superb edifice now occupied by the Royal British Institution, and adorned it with 143 paintings by 34 of the first British artists—most of them of life size, like those in the Rotunda of our Capitol. He employed the most eminent engravers to transfer 100 of these to copper, which constitute the great work known as Boydell's Illustrations of Shakspeare. It has been estimated by engravers that 400 years of labor were expended in the execution of these plates alone—i. e., that it would require 20 engravers 20 years to engrave them. Boydell's enthusiasm roused the nobility to patronize historical painting, so that the English school rose to such per-

fection that they style that period "the Golden Age of English art," and more great artists flourished then, than at any period since. Boydell is therefore more justly entitled, than Sir Joshua Reynolds, to be called the "Father of the English School of Historical Painting,"—for its present exaltation is mainly due to his example. He showed his countrymen the advantage and importance of encouraging and promoting native art.*

Now, I respectfully beg leave to submit a plan to the American people, for the promotion of art—a plan that is entirely practicable, and has the high approval of some of our most distinguished artists and men best informed on the subject of art. It will not only give immediate employment to one class of artists, but indirectly to all, by spreading the masterpieces of art before the whole people, for their instruction and delight, at a cheaper rate than they can obtain trashy French lithographs, which rather corrupt, than improve the public taste. It will, therefore, prove a most efficient promoter of art among us. I refer to the restoration and publication, under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution, as proposed in the preceding pages, of those invaluable works of art, entitled the Musée Français and the Musée Royal—works that originally cost untold gold. They are not, strictly speaking, *French works*, as some have ignorantly said, because they were executed under the auspices of the French government. They contain 522 engravings after the masterpieces of the world, in sculpture and painting; and in the execution of the plates, the most distinguished engravers of Europe—Italians, Germans, Flemings, and Frenchmen, were employed. They are works, then, that equally interest the whole civilized world. For fourteen years, I have watched the original coppers with intense anxiety. They now belong to me, and are safely landed on American soil, seeking an asylum never refused to a foreign beggar. All I ask is the satisfaction of seeing my plans consummated in the most effective and judicious way. My object ever has been, and is, to preserve these great works for the promo-

* As an illustration of the advantages of art to individuals and nations, let us also refer to another individual example—that of Alderman Copeland. This gentleman has acquired a vast fortune, and a world-wide reputation by his manufacture of a thousand exquisite things in porcelain and *bisquit*, as wares, ornaments, vases, statuettes, and other designs. Now all the credit really due the alderman, is his judgment, enterprise, and capital—the rest belongs to the artist—the tradesman monopolizes his genius, fame, and most of the fruits of his labors, to himself. People in admiring every beautiful fabric, article of taste, fashion, and luxury, which gives employment to thousands, and adds millions to the capital of a country, forget that they owe all these things to the poor artist, and that, without him, they might still live, as in olden times, in rude huts, sit in rustic chairs, dine off earthen platters, drink out of pewter mugs, and sleep on stone couches.

tion of the arts and sciences, now and in coming time. That my plans are entirely practicable, I have abundantly proved in the complete restoration of Boydell's Illustrations of Shakspeare,* under the most embarrassing circumstances. I had hoped to have been able to accomplish this enterprise alone, and in the end, to have left the plates and those of *Boydell* to some public institution—as they ought to be—but adverse circumstances beyond foresight or contract, have crippled my means and almost destroyed my every chance of success, as an individual.

From careful estimates I find, that, as a private enterprise, it will require a list of about 1000 subscribers, at \$250 each.† This large number it were difficult for me to obtain, at least, before the completion of the works.

In this estimate, 40 per cent. is allowed for commissions, advertising, newspaper notices, losses, &c. Most of these expenses, which will amount to a large sum, will be saved, if the works be published under the auspices of the Institution, for, by making it a public thing, it will immediately advertise itself. The press will commend it for the public good, and people will more readily subscribe. Gentlemen of taste will be glad to act as agents among their friends and acquaintances, all over the country, without remuneration. The public libraries will do the same. This

* I frequently use, in these pages, the name *Boydell*, for Boydell's Illustrations of Shakspeare, for the sake of brevity.

† Estimates for restoring the plates and publishing an edition of the Musée Français and the Musée Royal.

I propose to translate the text in full,—not condensed as in Galignani's edition,—because the essays and criticisms are very valuable; also to stereotype it.

FOR 500 COPIES, AS AN INDIVIDUAL ENTERPRISE.

<i>Dr.</i> —To stereotyping 2000 pp. Text, <i>a</i> \$5,.....	\$10,000
To restoring 522 plates, <i>a</i> \$150 each,.....	78,300
To paper and printing <i>a</i> \$60 per copy,.....	30,000
	<hr/>
	\$118,300
<i>Cr.</i> —By sales of Edition, <i>a</i> \$250 per copy,.....	\$125,000
Deduct Commissions, 25 per cent.,.....	31,250
“ Losses on Sales, 5 per cent.,.....	6,250
“ Notices and advertisements in the News- papers, 5 per cent.,.....	6,250
“ Doing up, boxing, shipping, and post- age, 5 per cent.,.....	6,250
	<hr/>
Net Sales,....	75,000
	<hr/>
Loss,.....	\$43,300

last was the policy pursued by the French Government. Thus the profits on sales will be more than doubled; consequently, a much smaller edition will pay.

I obtained about 900 subscribers to *Boydell*, but I lost 300 of these by the most infamous libels,—by prejudice and opposition,—the evil and

FOR 500 COPIES AS A PUBLIC ENTERPRISE.

The cost of restoration and publication will be the same as in the first statement. The advantages will be, the obtaining of twice as many subscribers, a saving of commissions, losses, &c., equal to 35 per cent., and double prices for 200 or more proof copies.

<i>Dr.</i> —To expenses of edition, as above,.....	\$118,200
<i>Cr.</i> —By net sales do.,.....	\$75,000
Add Commissions, losses, notices, &c., saved, equal to 35 per cent.,.....	42,750
“ Extra profit on 200 proof copies,.....	50,000
Net sales,.....	168,750
Profit,.....	\$50,450

FOR 1000 COPIES, AS AN INDIVIDUAL ENTERPRISE.

<i>Dr.</i> —To stereotyping 2000 pp. text, a \$5,.....	\$10,000
To restoring 522 plates, a \$150 each,.....	78,300
To paper and printing, a \$60 per copy,.....	60,000
	\$148,000
<i>Cr.</i> —By sales of edition,.....	\$250,000
Deduct 40 per cent. Commissions, &c.,.....	100,000
Net Sales,.....	150,000
Profit,.....	2,000

FOR 1000 COPIES AS A PUBLIC ENTERPRISE.

<i>Dr.</i> —To expenses of edition,.....	\$148,000
<i>Cr.</i> —By net sales of edition,.....	\$150,000
Add Commissions, &c., saved, 35 per cent.,.....	87,500
“ extra profit on 200 proof copies,.....	50,000
Net sales,.....	287,500
Profit,.....	\$139,500

Thus, as a public enterprise, it cannot fail to pay largely under *any circumstances*, even leaving out the extra price on 200 proof copies. If I obtained 900 subscribers to *Boydell*, surely 1000 may be obtained for these works, at only half the price per print. The works will then be preserved for future use, for the benefit of the rising generation and posterity. The fine arts are yet in their infancy in this country. Fifty years hence, the population of the United States will doubtless number 100 millions,

blasting effects of which I can never overcome. Calumny* leaves a stain that cannot be effaced.

I propose that the works be published in numbers of 4 plates each (as was done by the French Government), at \$2 per No., or about \$250 for the whole. The original prices was 90 francs per No. for the proofs, and 48 for the prints, making about \$2,500 for the proofs, and \$1,250 for the prints, of both works. This will place them within the reach of all.

and, as taste and wealth increase, the demand for such works will increase in a much greater ratio. The plates can be kept in good condition, at little expense, with the exercise of proper care and judgment, so that several thousand impressions may be struck from them. I have printed 1200 impressions from some of the most elaborately engraved *Boydell* plates—consequently most easily worn—(some of these are as highly wrought as any in the *Musées F. and R.*),—and yet, since the edition was printed, I have brought them all up to the proof state, at a small expense, and thus they may be kept in good condition.

I will guarantee the correctness of my estimates, as far as the restoration of the plates, stereotyping, paper, and printing, are concerned—that is, I will guarantee (and give bonds for the faithful performance of the contract) to restore the plates, print and deliver to the Smithsonian Institution, 500 copies for \$118,300, and 1000 copies for \$148,000. I will also agree to obtain, personally, 100 subscribers. I have most carefully examined the present condition of the coppers, and I believe that, on an average, they can be restored at a less cost than I have estimated. Those of the *Musée Royal* are not much worn—two limited editions only having been printed from them. Those of the *Musée Français* are more worn; but then there are many landscapes, sea-pieces, antique statues, and some portraits, in the restoration of which, the use of acids and the burnisher are perfect *steam engines* in saving labor. The knowledge I have gained by experience (and reliable knowledge, in such matters, can only be so obtained), would effect a saving of many thousands of dollars, in the restoration of the coppers alone. Every engraver should be put to his *forte*, or to that part of his business in which he excels. To illustrate: the forte of one is in the use of the graver—another the point; one excels in figures—another in landscapes; one in the use of acids, and another of the burnisher, &c. The *London Art Journal* pays its highest salary to a man whose sole business is to *lay the grounds*, and *bite* the plates with acids; and such is his skill, that he succeeds when all others fail. Very few engravers understand the use of the burnisher.

Again, a considerable sum might be saved, if deemed advisable, in stereotyping, paper, and printing, by condensing the text to about 525 pages. The valuable essays on the history of art might be advantageously printed in octavo form, which would be more convenient to read, and would have a paying circulation independent of the works. A large sum might also be realized by selling single plates, at double prices, and this would check the deluge of prints from foreign countries.

* “Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny.”—*Shakspeare*.

“Calumnious report is sure to leave a stain. We may repel the evil, but we cannot altogether efface the impression.”—*Beaumarchais*.

Now, a considerable sum is required to put the plan into successful operation; money must be expended for engraving, stereotyping, paper, printing, &c., before any paying subscribers can be obtained. It also requires time to forward the work and collect subscriptions—often a year—even though the terms be “cash on the delivery of each and every number;” otherwise dissatisfaction will arise.

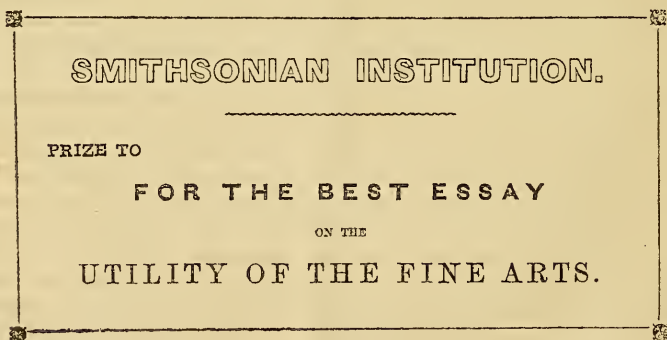
Therefore, as the income of the Institution is small, and ought to be devoted to the “increase and diffusion of knowledge among men,” in its widest sense, according to the donor’s will, I suggest that Congress authorize the Congressional Library to subscribe for 100 proof copies (to be distributed among the States), at double the price of the prints, and that the amount, \$50,000, be paid over to, or funded for, the Institution to draw upon.* This would be more than enough to put the enterprise into a self-paying condition. It would also enable her to lay aside 100

* If it be objected that this proposition, which equally interests every State, and every individual in the country, is unconstitutional, some other plan may be devised. But has not Congress expended large sums for similar objects? The price of a single equestrian statue, recently commissioned, expended in the manner I propose, would do more for the promotion of art in the United States, than millions expended in filling the grounds and parks of the Capitol with statues, and adorning the public edifices with costly paintings; because its influence would be local, and it would give employment only to a few distinguished artists; it would not be felt by the mass of artists or the people. The opinions of most persons on this point are extremely erroneous. I repeat, the *people* must be educated to love and appreciate art, to understand its importance to a country, in a political point of view—I mean, to its manufactures, fabrics, commerce, wealth, &c.,—before a school of our own can be sustained. Till then, we must import, and throw away millions on millions, and our artists must labor under its blasting influence, or abandon the field as many are now doing, for better employment. I am personally acquainted with many, very many artists; I know their feelings, and their opinions—their discouragements, and their wants. No matter how talented and indefatigable our artists may be, they must receive patronage of the people to develop their powers; for it is in vain for them to seek Government employment, which must always be small. Again, it may be said, “You propose to revive an old work.” Is it then the less valuable? Shall we throw away gold because it is the product of a foreign country? If so, we must return to the primitive condition of the Spartans or Swedes. Are not these works exceedingly rare in the United States? Not one in ten thousand has ever seen a copy. Were they not projected by the most enlightened Government of Europe, for the especial object of promoting art, without any regard to cost? Will our Government, or any other Government, in all probability, ever again undertake such an enterprise? What I propose is a national thing, for the benefit of all,—as it should be; yet Government is not taxed a dollar beyond a liberal subscription. Should Government, however, refuse to subscribe, but remit the duties, let the Smithsonian Institution appeal to the people, and, I doubt not, there is patriotism enough left in the country to enable her to obtain 200 subscribers for proof copies, paid in advance, to furnish her with abundant funds, to accomplish so glorious an object.

or more proof copies for future use. This is the custom throughout Europe. The proofs are always double the price of the prints. Many gentlemen, of taste and wealth, would prefer the proof copies, and this would greatly augment her resources. I did not do this with *Boydell*, because I had not the means, and I have lost many subscribers thereby. If the Institution succeeds in carrying out the enterprise profitably, she will use the surplus for the public good. She can then afford to place a copy in every college and public library in the country, too poor to buy it.

I propose also, that she shall award prizes of proof copies (to which I will add as many copies of *Boydell* in gift), for a series of essays on subjects most important to the country, as the arts, sciences, agriculture, political economy, hygiene, mental and physical culture, common school education, socially and politically considered, the advantages or disadvantages of substituting the living for the dead languages in our colleges, &c., &c. Let these essays be published at cost, and scattered in every hamlet in the land, with the *stamp* of authority which such an institution only can give. The subject is one of almost incalculable importance. If the prizes be not deemed a sufficient inducement to draw out the best talent in the country, money may be substituted, or added to them.*

* This plan, under the management of the Smithsonian Institution, would doubtless enlist the patriotism and the best talent in the country. The honor of being the author of a prize essay is a powerful stimulant, to say nothing of the substantial reward, and a magnificent monument. The prize copies should be elegantly bound in full morocco and certified after this sort:—



It may be objected that my plans are not legitimate objects for the Smithsonian Institution to engage in. Are not the Fine Arts of any importance to our country and the world? May not our artists contribute something to the world's knowledge in art? Are not the proposed prize essays of any importance, and will they not greatly tend to "the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men?" The sciences of Geology and Chemistry are of the greatest importance to agriculture, to show what

You may ask me, (as many have), "Why do you not make an arrangement with some publishing-house to take hold of the enterprise with you?" I have made the proposition to several, and they refused me. I offered to give the copy-right of my Dictionary to two of the most eminent publishing-houses in New York, if they would publish it. "No; it would not pay;"—so I was obliged to get it published on my own account, at a cost of \$5,000. They regard those kind of enterprises too hazardous in the present state of the fine arts in our country.

You may still inquire,—“As you have succeeded in *Boydell*, why can you not in this?"

I have already, in part, replied to, or anticipated this question; namely, *the means*. Had I abundant means I should not have made this proposition. I would have carried out my plans alone. Now, as an individual enterprise, unless I can obtain more sympathy and support, *it may fail*;

soils and manures are adapted to particular grains, grasses, and other products. A multitude of works and periodicals treat of these subjects, and much good has been done, but they all differ in theory and practice; the great mass of farmers soon get tired of experimenting, and return to the old method of farming. What is wanted is, a condensed, scientific, standard and practical book, stamped with authority.

Again; are the laws of health, and of mental and physical culture, at all understood by the great mass of the people? Are not the brains of multitudes of children forced, like hot-house plants, and the little sense they ever had, educated out of them before they are grown up, and their health for ever destroyed? Do not, for the same reasons, half our Collegiates graduate with broken-down constitutions? Whenever the laws of nature are violated, she will, sooner or later, inflict punishment. *They are the legitimate objects of the Smithsonian Institution*, and their successful accomplishment would greatly add to her usefulness and renown. People could then see that she had done something "for the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men," in its widest and best sense.

Again, it may be objected that she has not the funds; and if she had, it would divert her from her more legitimate objects. I do not propose to take a dollar from her funds, but to put thousands into her coffers. She need not employ a single extra clerk. All that is wanted, is her approbation, influence, and support. I propose to do all the labor myself. Give me a quiet mind, and I can do it. During the last six years, besides a daily professional occupation of eight or ten hours, I have restored *Boydell* and wrote the text; daily and almost hourly, supervising engravers, printers, stereotypers, doing up, shipping, &c.; besides keeping my books, accounts, and carrying on an extensive daily correspondence, without the assistance of a single clerk, because a clerk could not render me any material assistance. It is, however, a just tribute to my wife—herself an accomplished artist—to say that she has been worth to me more than a dozen clerks. I have also fitted for the press and published my Dictionary of Painters, Engravers, Sculptors, and Architects, of 1,300 solid imperial octavo pages, and my Anecdotes of the same in three volumes duodecimo, 1,000 pages. All this I confess has been an amount of mental and physical labor that I should be unwilling to undertake again, for fear of that retribution which the laws of offended nature might demand.

as a public one it *must succeed*; and can be rapidly consummated; and my object will be accomplished. I would not again undergo the contention, the agony of mind, and the sleepless nights I have endured for the last six years "for the sea's worth," could I not use it for some beneficial purpose. In order that you may understand this, I must briefly detail the formidable difficulties I have been compelled to encounter.

When I commenced *Boydell* I was compelled to expend a large sum, first in experimenting and testing its practicability and getting it under way. It was a novel enterprise. Such a thing as restoring the worn-out plates of an expensive work, was unknown in the history of art, and was deemed impracticable. Even our first Engravers and Artists maintained that it could not be done, and some people are hardy enough to assert it now.

I knew that in a few rare instances, eminent Italian Engravers had restored a rare and valuable plate by some celebrated master; and that Charles Heath had restored Hogarth's works; but then these last plates were, for the most part only coarse etchings. I also knew that the great difficulty, in the engraver's art, was to make what he calls the etching; i. e., to reduce the work to be engraved to the proper size, transfer it to the plate and enter all the lines; then his subordinates work up the plate, and the master finishes it. I reasoned, that in restoring a copper-plate, all this preliminary and troublesome business was obviated. The design was all there, and the engraver, having the proof print of the original plate before him, and having little or no reflective powers to exercise (as he could see at once the effect to be produced), he could rapidly run his graver through the lines, and that he could thus re-cut ten lines where he could enter one in a new plate. In short, that it would require one master engraver—one capable of engraving any of the plates, and expert subordinates. I bought some old copper-plates and had experiments made, and satisfied myself of the correctness of my views. I then proceeded cautiously with my operations till I felt sure of success. In the meantime, it leaked out and got into the newspapers. The novelty of the undertaking and wide reputation of the work created quite a sensation—the restoration was acknowledged by competent judges to be entirely successful. It was hailed by the press as a great enterprise, worthy of the most liberal patronage. Thus encouraged, I went on boldly, and issued my first number. An unexpected, formidable—and probably to you incredible—difficulty now sprung up. The agents of the English print-publishers immediately sounded the alarm to their superiors, that this enterprise would materially injure their print trade (thank God it has, and if I live, I hope to injure it more), and must be broken down. The American people would not buy so many of their mezzotint prints at \$5, \$10, \$15, and \$20 each, when they could get these magnificent

prints for \$1, which originally cost ten times the labor to engrave (for mezzotint, next to aquatint, is the cheapest style of engraving—even in their modern line plates, most of the work is ruled in; whereas in the *Boydell plates* there is not a line of machine work, and some of the plates are known to have occupied the engraver from five to six years each). They began to libel me in a series of shrewdly written articles, well calculated to effect the object intended, published in the *London Art Journal*, and the *Illustrated English Newspapers* which circulate largely in the United States. They made me responsible for what the press said; they declared that the plates had passed through a succession of hands, and that they had been used as long as any saleable impressions could be obtained from them; that it was utterly impossible to restore the plates, and that the whole project was nothing more than an ingenious Yankee cheat. They then went on to warn their “kind patrons in America against being victimized.” Not satisfied with this calumny, they maliciously coupled my name with picture dealers. “We have reason to know, that more than one defeated dealer in ‘ancient masters’ has left, or is about to leave England, to ‘try his luck’ in the United States; and we forewarn those upon whom imposition is about to be tried.” To counteract this mischief I obtained the certificate of approbation appended to the preface of the second volume of the American edition of *Boydell*, signed by upwards of one hundred distinguished citizens of New York—men too well known to admit of the supposition that their judgment or integrity could be influenced. They had the coppers and the proofs struck by Boydell, and others from the restored plates laying before them.*

CERTIFICATE.

*“We, the undersigned, having examined some of the *original* copper-plates of ‘*Boydell’s Illustrations of Shakspeare*,’ and compared the proofs taken from them by Boydell himself, with those taken by *Dr. S. Spooner*, within the last few weeks, from a number of the plates restored by him, give it as our deliberate opinion and judgment, that his efforts to restore this magnificent work, have, so far, proved entirely successful; and we heartily recommend it to the American public as being in every respect worthy of their liberal patronage, and as eminently calculated not only to gratify those who may become its possessors, but also, to encourage and promote the advancement of the Fine Arts in our country.

New-York, March, 1848.

WASHINGTON IRVING,
JOHN J. AUDUBON, [*Artist.*]
THEO. FRELINGHUYSON,
JOHN VAN BUREN,
JNO. INMAN,
RAWDON, WRIGHT & HATCH, [*Engs.*]
ANDREW H. MICKLE,

THOMAS COLE, [*Artist.*]
WM. C. BRYANT,
J. WATSON WEBB,
M. M. NOAH,
BENJ. F. BUTLER.
N. P. WILLIS,
GERARD C. LESTER,

Finding that they had not succeeded in their nefarious object, they *tacked* about; they admitted that it was possible to restore the work at the enormous cost of \$50,000, provided, that "English artists" were employed (for they had learned that my chief engraver was an Englishman), but then they went on to deplore that so vast a sum should be thrown away on a worthless work, when its judicious use would effect so

GEORGE P. MORRIS,
S. DEWITT BLOODGOOD,
GEO. P. PUTNAM,
HORACE GREELEY,
DANFORTH & HUFTY, [*Engravers.*]
W. L. ORMSBY, [*Eng.*]
HENRY H. LEEDS & Co.,
ROBT. P. MORRIS,
AARON VANDERPOOL,
EGBERT BENSON,
HARPER & BROTHERS,
THEODORE SEDGWICK,
JAMES W. GERARD,
HENRY BREVOORT,
AARON CLARK,
HORACE GREEN, [*M. D.*]
WM. V. BRADY,
C. TEMPLE EMMET,
ELEAZER PARMLY,
J. I. CODDINGTON,
GEORGE PARKER, [*Eng.*]
JAMES R. WHITING,
JOHN MCKEON,
CAMPBELL P. WHITE,
JONA. M. WAINWRIGHT, [*D. D.*]
S. F. B. MORSE, [*Artist.*]
THOS. S. HENRY,
JOSEPH ALLEGRI, [*Artist.*]
THOS. H. TAYLOR, [*D. D.*]
THOS. R. MINTURN,

DANIEL APPLETON & Co.,
N. CALYO, [*Artist.*]
PROSPER M. WETMORE,
STEPHEN H. TYNG, [*D. D.*]
HUGH MAXWELL,
FRANCIS BARRETTO,
WM. B. COZZENS,
G. & W. ENDICOTT, [*Engs.*]
DUDLEY SELDEN,
VALENTINE MOTT, [*M. D.*]
GARDNIER G. HOWLAND,
WM. T. PORTER,
GEORGE POTTS, [*D. D.*]
ELY MOORE,
AARON LEVY,
DAVID B. OGDEN,
DAVID GRAHAM,
H. W. HEWET, [*Eng.*]
JOHN W. FRANCIS, [*M. D.*]
JOSEPH M. SMITH, [*M. D.*]
J. B. FORREST, [*Eng.*]
HENRY JORDON, [*Eng.*]
WM. BERRIAN, [*D. D.*]
JAMES M. SMITH, JR.,
WM. F. HAVERMEYER,
M. P. PARKS, [*D. D.*]
RAFFAELLE MOLINI, [*Artist.*]
JAS. B. HARDENBERGH, [*D. D.*]
ALEX. H. STEVENS, [*M. D.*]
&c., &c., &c.,

I boldly and unhesitatingly declare that I have not only fully restored this great work, but in many respects surpassed the original edition. The American Edition is got up in a far superior style of costly elegance—it has a letter-press description and criticism on each plate, which the old had not. There is a great deal of new lining introduced into many of the plates; and by following the instructions of Rubens, and the practice pursued by the great engravers who engraved his works, under his immediate supervision, we have generally obtained a freedom, and a boldness of relief, not in the old work. (See the American Edition of *Boydell*, text to plate 97.) I have never failed to satisfy an unprejudiced person, who would be at the trouble to compare the works, of the truth of my assertion.

much for art. (Before the *certificate* appeared, they had not said a word against the excellence of the work.) They declared that the work was got up when the fine arts were in their infancy in England; that the engravings, with the exception of a very few,—especially two or three after Sir Joshua Reynolds,—were poor affairs (what a compliment to their “Golden Age of English Art”), and that the work was now held in such little estimation in England, that it could be purchased for a very small sum.* Now, to estimate the injury thus wilfully inflicted on me, I must state (to say nothing of the influence of those articles which appeared in the Illustrated papers before referred to), that the London Art-Journal, published by a London print dealer “under the patronage of the Queen and nobility of England,” is generally looked upon as the head of authority in all matters appertaining to art; that it circulates, in the United States and in the British Provinces, about 8000 copies; and that it is taken by those men of taste and wealth who would be most likely to subscribe for *Boydell*. They not only poisoned and prejudiced the public mind, even to this day, but they cooled the sympathetic ardor of the press, and laid me under tremendous contributions. At one time, I had about one hundred persons on my free list. Those well disposed towards me, fearful of committal, kept a cold silence, or feebly praised. Others pursued a different course, and I found a prosecution the *cheapest* way to shut their mouths.

In the winter of 1850, a certain editor of a Richmond paper, taking offence at my agent, for reasons best known to himself, copied some of the libels before mentioned, threw doubt on the genuineness of the work, applied to me the basest epithets, and declared that I was a rabid abolitionist. Now, Heaven knows that if I would abolish anything, it is this ceaseless agitation of the slavery question. By thus putting a political face on the subject, his articles were largely circulated abroad, especially by the Southern press. I arrested this man, that I might have an opportunity of proving the falsity of all these libels, and thus produce a counter current. He refused to make any amends, any recantation, or even to give himself the trouble to examine whether he might not be in error.

* Mr. Daniel Rice, my agent at New Orleans, informed me that Mr. Robb, the well-known connoisseur and patron of art in that city, purchased a proof copy before the letter, of *Boydell*, in London, about 1848, for which he paid \$1,250, equal to fifty guineas more than the original subscription price, a proof of the rarity of fine copies of the old edition, and of their value. This gentleman also desired Mr. Rice to allow him to compare the American edition with his proof copy; he was so pleased with the result, that several subscribers were obtained through his influence. This conduct was highly honorable, and deserves record; it contrasts strongly with the *mean-ness* of certain book-men in New-York, Philadelphia, Boston, and other cities, who imported all the worn-out copies they could obtain, to take advantage of my advertising, and thus undersell me, to my great injury.

* He appealed the cause to the U. S. Circuit Court, in New York, and, to this day, I have not been able to bring on a trial. The result of all these things was most disastrous to me. My general travelling agent, South, during the six months following, did not sell enough to pay his expenses; my agents were driven from the field in disgust, or ceased to act with energy. They generally met with a cold reception, and not unfrequently with the rebuff,—“We have seen notices of the work—it is a humbug—we don’t want to look at it.” They had heard one side of the question; it was enough to prevent them from listening to the other. Even to this day, the deadly venom acts with undiminished energy. I lost 300 subscribers, which I had obtained at great expense; of about 100 in the Canadas, only two have yet completed their subscriptions. This brief sketch is not exaggeration; it is far below the reality. Are not the English supremely jealous and selfish in their monopolies? Have they not tried, again and again, to break down our manufactories, and have they not sometimes succeeded? Did they not first libel, and then try to run off, our steamers? The English print trade in the United States amounts to a vast sum, annually, and is worth contending for. I have found that they knew more of my affairs than did my best friends. The very words and plans I now lay before you, will fly, with the wings of the wind, across the Atlantic, and be noted for future envenomed shafts, for “the benefit of their kind friends in America.”*

* There is *another reason* more potent and fatal to its success as an individual enterprise. When I bought the coppers, it was expressly stipulated in the agreement that from that time, no more copies should be imported into the United States, and none should be sold to any individual or house for that purpose. The agreement in these respects has not been violated, to my knowledge; but it has been grossly violated in a worse respect; an edition has been surreptitiously printed from the plates of the Musée Royal, and aught I know, from the Musée Français. This fact is admitted, and as far as I can ascertain, there are about 200 copies of each work on sale in Paris. Now, the moment I should create a demand for the works in the United States, the country would be flooded with these worn impressions, the American Edition under-sold, and the success of the enterprise irretrievably destroyed—not so much for the number of copies that could be brought into the market, as from the fact, that the works could be obtained at a less cost, and that the great mass of the people would not appreciate the difference in the value of this French and the American Editions. This was the great obstacle to *Boydell*, yet I overcame it. Now the parties are abundantly responsible for this gross violation of the agreement, and they offer to sell me the whole edition of both works at cost of paper and printing, knowing full well that it is utterly impossible for me to pay for them. As a public enterprise, the matter might be compromised—the whole edition might be bought, kept on sale in Paris, and a handsome profit realized, without interfering in the least with the sale of the American Edition, for as soon as it is known in Paris that the coppers have been shipped out of the country, the sale there will be increased. The demand for all the old fine works on art is now greatly on the increase in Europe. If this should not be deemed advisa-

All I want—all I ask for, is the honor of seeing my plans consummated, for which I have labored incessantly many years. Let the Smithsonian Institution extend their protecting wings, the enterprise can be triumphantly and profitably consummated, and these great works preserved for posterity. If any better plan can be devised, I am ready to subscribe to it. But I conjure the American people to embrace this golden opportunity for the promotion of art in a most substantial, cheap, and lasting manner. Whatever is done, must be done soon, as the bond will expire, and then the coppers must return whence they came.

Such works as Boydell's Illustrations of Shakspeare, the Musée Français and the Musée Royal, will doubtless never be produced again. They are too expensive, and can never be made to pay, as *new works*. Boydell failed for a vast sum, and the French Government never was, and never expected to be remunerated by sales; she had a higher motive—the promotion of art. If you neglect and condemn these proffered advantages, will not posterity justly condemn you for dereliction of duty to yourselves, to them, and to the world? For myself I care not—I have no dependents. Have I not also made my “*mark*” in the world? and though it be unacknowledged in my day, will not posterity surely do me justice? Though enthusiastic, I am not mad. What great scheme can be accomplished without enthusiasm? All my plans have been laid with deliberation and judgment, and I cannot now see wherein I could have improved them, without that practical knowledge which only can be gained by experience. Nor am I altogether ignorant of art; I have studied and investigated the subject in all its branches for twenty years. Failing in this last appeal, I shall be compelled henceforward to abandon the sterile field, and to enter this, my protest, against the coldness and injustice of this age, for the quiet practice of a profession, which has been my main stay and support, rather than public patronage, in the prosecution of more favorite pursuits. I have had “*glory enough* ;” and this, doubtless, is my *final* effort for the promotion of those arts which have ever afforded me the greatest pleasure.

ble, to control easily the whole matter, an injunction might be obtained from the French government, under the circumstances of the agreement, prohibiting the exportation of the works to the United States. This fact, which has only transpired since the plates were in this country, is the *great destroyer* of all my hopes of success, as an individual enterprise. Importation, indirectly, cannot be prevented by any legal process. The works may be sold to foreign houses, and they may export, or supply all orders from the United States, with impunity. This fact, also, in addition to the time when the Custom House bond will expire, makes decisive action necessary, if anything is to be done to carry out my plans. Thus, from the beginning to the end, it will be perceived, that I have had to contend not only with foreign wiles, and against foreign taste and prejudice, but the foulest conspiracies, and acts of most outrageous injustice, enough to suppress the ardor and paralyze the energies of the most persevering devotee.







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